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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 004653

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [SETTLEMENTS](#)

SUBJECT: ECF: SEPTEMBER COMPLETION OF JERUSALEM ENVELOPE
UNLIKELY, PLANS FOR NEW SETTLEMENTS

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: Colonel (ret.) Shaul Arieli, consultant at the Economic Cooperation Foundation and advisor to the High Court on the routing of the separation barrier, told economic officer that it is unlikely that Israel will complete construction of the Jerusalem envelope--the Jerusalem section of the barrier--by September 1 despite a cabinet decision on July 10 to do so. According to Arieli, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has also instructed the Defense Ministry to commence construction of the barrier near the Etzion bloc of settlements located southwest of Jerusalem. Arieli said that Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski and the Ministry of Housing are moving forward to advance plans for eight settlements in and around the Jerusalem area. End summary.

Envelope to Envelop Jerusalem

¶12. (C) Colonel (ret.) Shaul Arieli, consultant at the Economic Cooperation Foundation and High Court advisor on the separation barrier, confirmed to econoff that the Israeli cabinet's decision on July 10 to complete the Jerusalem envelope by September 1 did not change any part of the separation barrier's February 2005 route. The cabinet's decision only accelerated construction of the Jerusalem envelope section. Arieli stated that despite this accelerated timeframe, however, Israel probably does not have enough resources to accomplish the simultaneous tasks of disengaging from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements and completing the envelope. (Note: The Jerusalem Post reported July 11 that the Jerusalem envelope will separate parts of East Jerusalem from the rest of the city, leaving 55,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, from the neighborhoods of Kafr Aqab, Anata, Qalandiya, and Shu'fat Camp, outside the city on the "Palestinian side" of the barrier. End note.)

¶13. (C) In response to econoff's question on whether petitions against the barrier would further slow construction, Arieli said the High Court would likely make one decision to address all or most of the 13 petitions against the envelope, so individual petitions would not delay its construction. He also did not foresee the Court deciding on the petitions until after disengagement. (Note: On July 11, the High Court rejected a request by Israel human rights attorney Danny Seidemann to issue an injunction suspending construction work on the barrier in the area of Shu'fat Camp in East Jerusalem. Seidemann's petition against the section of the barrier on behalf of residents of Shofat, Ras Hamis, and Anata remains to be decided. End note.)

¶14. (C) Arieli alleged that Palestinians have not provided the court with alternative barrier routes because they object to the barrier on principle. Ha'aretz reported July 12, however, that Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem neighborhoods have proposed several alternatives, listed in Seidemann's petitions. Seidemann told ConGen poloff--an account also printed in Ha'aretz--that in response to his proposed alternative routes, he was told by an unnamed Defense Ministry official that the proposal would be rejected because "the intention is to get these people out of Jerusalem and to associate them with the West Bank." Arieli said that in the case of petitions from Palestinians in al-Ram, north of Jerusalem, the Court has told the Palestinians and their lawyer that they must provide the Court with alternative routing of the barrier for the Court to consider, or face the probability that they will lose their case against the current route.

¶15. (C) According to Arieli, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has also instructed the Defense Ministry to commence construction of the separation barrier near the Etzion settlement bloc, located southwest of Jerusalem, to link up with the Jerusalem envelope.

Prospective Facts on the Ground

¶16. (C) Despite Israel's plans to evacuate from the Gaza Strip and four northern West Bank settlements, Israel is moving forward with settlement projects aimed at maintaining

Israel's hold of Jerusalem and bolstering surrounding settlement blocs, according to Arieli. He stated that the Ministry of Construction and Housing and Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski are working to further plans already submitted for eight new Israeli neighborhoods in the Jerusalem area, all located inside the barrier's envelope. These projects include:

--Construction is currently ongoing for the planned settlement of Nof Zahav. Nof Zahav is located in the Palestinian village of Jabal al-Mukabir, south of the Old City, and press reports say that 450-550 units are expected to be built here. Arieli stated, however, that the developer of the project is having problems selling the planned housing units to be built.

--The planned Israeli settlement of Kidmat Zion is located in the Palestinian village of Abu Dis. Currently, Kidmat Zion has two structures at the site, and a road for settlers living at the site was constructed in early 2005. According to press reports, architects started planning for the construction of the 220-apartment community in Kidmat Zion in 1997, and gained approval from the local planning council in May 2000. The Jerusalem Municipal Council approved the plan in March 2001.

--There is a planned settlement to be located west of the Palestinian village of Al-Tira, northwest of Jerusalem. By using a geographic information systems program, econoff notes that the municipal boundaries of the Giv'at Ze'ev settlement extend to the projected location of where this new neighborhood is planned. If built, a new neighborhood in this area would serve to link the settlements of Bet Horon and Giv'at Ze'ev. Israel considers land within a settlement's municipal boundaries acceptable area to build extended or new settlement neighborhoods.

--A planned settlement at Geva, located north of Jerusalem. Newe Ya'aqov's settlement municipal boundaries extend northeast beyond the current settlement's footprint to the settlement of Adam. This is the approximate location of Geva, which, if built, will potentially create contiguity between the settlements of Newe Ya'aqov and Adam.

--Plans for an Israeli settlement in the Palestinian village of Wadi al-Joz located east of the Old City. In September 2004, Lupolianski wrote a letter to the Housing Ministry stating his intention to rezone Wadi al-Joz for Israeli settlers. Lupolianski wrote that rezoning, "will strengthen the link between the Jewish neighborhoods and public institutions in the Mt. Scopus area and the eastern part of the Old City."

--A planned settlement located west of the Palestinian village of Az Za'ayyam, near Mt. Scopus University in Jerusalem.

--A planned settlement located east of the settlement of Betar, located west of Bethlehem.

--A planned settlement adjacent to the Palestinian village of Al Wallaja, located southwest of Jerusalem.

Who is Shaul Arieli?

17. (C) Colonel (ret.) Shaul Arieli is a former brigade commander in the northern Gaza Strip, Israel Defense Forces head of the interim agreement administration, and head of the negotiating administration in former Prime Minister Ehud Barak's office. Arieli was also an initiator of the Geneva Accords.

18. (C) Currently, Arieli is a member of the Council for Peace and Security--an organization whose members include former high ranking IDF, Shin Bet, and Mossad officers and which recommended an alternative route to the barrier in the Bayt Surik area, north of Jerusalem. In June 2004, Arieli testified to Israel's High Court of Justice against the route of the Jerusalem envelope in the Bayt Surik area, and the High Court later instructed the GOI to come up with an alternative route. Arieli has been hired by the High Court as an advisor on the routing of the barrier.

19. (C) Comment: Although construction has not started on many of the planned projects identified by Arieli, movement on these plans by Israel may be ongoing and should not be discounted. In 2003, Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing, with the cooperation of the Jerusalem municipality, announced plans to build small settlement neighborhoods in Jerusalem, given that the nuclei for them already existed. Wadi al-Joz, Nof Zahav, and Kidmat Zion were three strategic projects identified. Construction is currently on going at Nof Zahav and there are residents at Kidmat Zion. End comment.

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KURTZER